

A Practical Approach to Race Relations

One foremost school of psychological thought holds that at one time in the life of an individual, he is ego-centric. This period of ego-centricity usually coincides with adolescence from puberty to about the eighteenth year. This is very roughly speaking, of course. Indeed many individuals exhibit vestigial remains of this ego-centric period, throughout their life. Many individuals never become able to see the world in any other light than that of their own pleasure.

If we may admit a certain strain of this ego-centricity in adults, as being normal, then we may evaluate much of what goes on in the world, in terms of our own frustrations, happiness, successes and failures. And, we may admit this latter without embarrassment, as long as such evaluation (based on personal experience only) is not utilized as the sole motivating factor in our own activities. This is to say, that, our evaluation of what goes on in the world, evaluated on the basis of our individual personal experience and emotions only, is valid only if we recognize the limitation of our own personal experiences and this of our evaluation. Therefore, actions on the basis of such limited evaluation becomes extremely erroneous.

This afternoon I want to discuss "A Practical Approach to Race Relations" with counted grains of ego-centricity, a large beaker of other people's experience, mixed in a crucible of hard facts, and stirred with a rod of realistic reasoning. Through this mixture of abstract ingredients, my hope is that we may arrive at a real sense of objectivity. It is this objectivity that is essential for any thorough consideration of race relations.

May we first investigate our own personalities. I have mentioned that normal adults do possess vestigial remains of a previous period of being completely self-centered. In some of us this condition was more definite than what others of us experienced. As adults many persons have less of this type of immaturity than others. - How self-centered are you?

I am sure that almost without exception everyone within my hearing, will say, "Well I can see the point of beginning with that question, but it doesn't apply directly to me." - I hope that answer is correct. - However, if it is correct, it will be the first group of this size in which it is true. I would commend each person here, therefore.

Now, as we analyze ourselves, let's think for a moment about our personal relationships, and use this as the first testing ground. What type of friendships do you have, what type do you enjoy most? Are they friendships that just happen, "say as the result of everyday contact? Have most of your friendships developed as the result of